

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

CHILDREN'S BUREAU

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CHILDREN'S YEAR

APRIL 6
1919

SAVE 100,000 BABIES

GET A SQUARE DEAL FOR CHILDREN

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CHILDREN'S YEAR LEAFLET NO. 1

Bureau Publication No. 36

PREPARED IN COLLABORATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF
CHILD WELFARE OF THE WOMAN'S COMMITTEE, COUNCIL
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CHILDREN'S YEAR.

April 6, 1918—April 6, 1919.

The second year of the war should be marked by determined Nationwide effort on behalf of childhood. Other warring countries have learned that national security requires the protection of children. They are proving their conviction by extraordinary effort and large expenditure. The Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor and the Child Welfare Department of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense are therefore calling upon the United States to heed the experience of Europe and to make the second year of the war, in fact as well as in name, a Children's Year throughout the country.

Careful study of the available sources of information about child welfare in the principal warring countries reveals striking developments of work to save the lives and health of mothers and babies, and to maintain family life and home care of children. For example, England during the second year of the war reduced her infant mortality rate to the lowest point in her history, and a special report issued in 1917 by the medical officer of the local government board of Great Britain sets forth the simple methods by which this was accomplished. The new war-orphan laws of France and Italy make special provision for children whose homes have been broken up by the casualties of war.

The importance of community work for older children is also emphasized. Many of the exemptions to child-labor laws permitted by England and France in the early months of the war have been abolished. Bills to provide fuller education, physical training, and occupational teaching are pending in the parliaments of England and France. England has for the last 12 months allowed Government funds for the support of children's play centers.

The volunteer effort which must usually precede constructive action by the Government has been even more extended. In each country special work to save babies' lives and to provide for children's care has been carried on since the beginning of the war; and as the war has progressed, provision for children's recreation and for protection against delinquency has received increasing attention.

Foreign authorities agree that child-welfare work must be developed now, in the midst of exhausting war; the future of each

nation makes this imperative. As examples of official statements which are found in the reports from every country, we quote only two. The first is taken from the last annual report of the chief medical officer of the British Board of Education.

The European war has given new emphasis to the importance of the child as a primary national asset. The future and strength of the nation unquestionably depend upon the vitality of the child, upon his health and development, and upon his education and equipment for citizenship. Great and far-reaching issues have their origin and some of their inspiration in him. Yet in a certain though narrow sense everything depends upon his physique. If that be sound, we have the rock upon which a nation and a race may be built; if that be impaired, we lack that foundation and build on the sand. It would be difficult to overestimate the volume of national inefficiency, unfitness and suffering, of unnecessary expenditure, and of industrial unrest and unemployability to which this country consents because of its relative failure to rear and to educate a healthy, virile, and well-equipped race of children and young people. There is no investment comparable to this, no national economy so fundamental; there is also no waste so irretrievable as that of a nation which is careless of its rising generation. And the goal is not an industrial machine, a technical workman, a "hand," available merely for the increase of material output and the acquisition of a wage at the earliest moment, but a human personality, well grown and ready in body and mind, able to work, able to play, a good citizen, the healthy parent of a future generation.

Again, in France, the Minister of Public Instruction says:

The question of school attendance was never more pressing; never was the diligence of our pupils more necessary; but never were there more obstacles in its way. Double will be to-morrow the task of the pupils of to-day; twice as intense, therefore, should be their preparation for this task, and it is precisely at this hour that, in the absence of their mobilized fathers, they run the risk of escaping all educational influences. Therefore, more than in time of peace, we should fight now against the obstacles in the way of school attendance.

If argument were needed for greater attention to the physical care of children in the United States, it is found in the result of the first draft with its rejection of one-third of the men as not physically sound. We are told that a large proportion of the rejections were for causes dating back to infancy and early childhood which could have been removed had they been recognized and treated properly at the right time. The Weighing and Measuring Test mentioned in this circular is intended to aid in forestalling like deficiencies in the young of to-day.

The Program.

A working program for Children's Year has been prepared by the Children's Bureau. Through the Child Welfare Department of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense and through the State and county councils of defense, this program is being placed before the Child Welfare Committee of each local council. Upon the activities of these local committees and the response and

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cooperation of individual people in each community the success of Children's Year depends. Those who wish to further the work for Children's Year should therefore get in touch with their local council of defense.

Everyone can help: Not only mothers and fathers, teachers, physicians, infant-welfare nurses, and other social workers who have to do with children, but men and women experienced in organization, and young people with leisure and good will—in fact, all who want to do their bit in Children's Year—will find some way to serve their local committees.

For practical convenience the work proposed for Children's Year is grouped under certain topics, four of them concerned primarily with the needs of normal children living in their own normal homes, and a fifth concerned with the special problems of children whose homes have broken down, or who for any reason need unusual care:

- I. Public protection of mothers, infants, and young children.
- II. Home care and income.
- III. Child labor and education.
- IV. Recreation.
- V. Children in need of special care.

I. *Public protection of mothers, infants, and young children.*—As a definite goal in the protection of mothers, infants, and young children, it is proposed to save the lives of 100,000 young children during Children's Year. About 300,000 children under 5 years old died in the United States during the first year of the war, and it is estimated that at least one-half of these deaths might have been prevented by proper care. An analysis of the gains made during recent years in certain American communities and the striking decreases in infant mortality in England during her second year of war indicate that the proposal to save 100,000 lives is a reasonable undertaking.

Many of the activities suggested for Children's Year will not require money. Physicians and nurses and trained workers in other fields will give generously, as they have always done, of time and service: and much assistance can be given by untrained volunteers. But in all the plans thus far devised for the saving of mothers and babies the regular, full-time work of the public-health nurse is indispensable. And war time, with its heavy drain upon the services of physicians and nurses, will more than ever place upon the salaried public-health nurse the actual work of helping mothers to give their children better care.

The first community activity of Children's Year will be a Nationwide Weighing and Measuring Test of young children, carried on between the 6th of April and the 6th of June by the local committees of the Council of National Defense in cooperation with the Children's

Bureau. Weight and height are a rough index of the health of growing children. When these are found to be seriously below the average, whether in individual cases or in certain sections of the community, the test should be followed by intensive care. In fact, the test can be of permanent value only as it leads to some permanent development of work for protecting mothers and young children in each community.

II. *Home care and income.*—How mothers may be enabled to care for their own children at home with an income sufficient for family needs, instead of going out to help in earning their children's daily bread; how information about the best modern standards of house-keeping and the home care of older children may be popularized and made available for all—the study of these problems in their practical bearing is the aim of the work suggested under the subject, "Home care and income." For the saving of 100,000 lives of babies and little children this work is of great importance.

The infant mortality rates among babies of working mothers are found in studies made by the Children's Bureau to be considerably higher than the mortality rates among babies of mothers who do not go out to work. But older children, too, pay a penalty when the mother is obliged to go out to work. Too often both health and behavior suffer from such a lack of home care. In fact, the increased employment of mothers during the war is constantly referred to by foreign writers as one of the chief causes of the increased delinquency among children.

III. *Child labor and education.*—The burden of family support should not be placed upon young children. In some ways the country has started well. The Federal child-labor law became effective on September 1, 1917, and outside of one North Carolina district, in which a test case was raised, it is being enforced without exemptions. The War and Navy Departments are requiring that the standards of the Federal law be enforced in all their reservations, camps, and yards. But this is not enough. Communities should be on their guard against permitting special war-time exemptions from State child-labor and school-attendance laws, and they should develop constructive measures to meet the conditions which lead to the employment of children.

IV. *Recreation.*—Again, we have the testimony of foreign writers not only that during war time there is danger of overwork and of the breaking down of home life, but that the maintaining and developing of recreation are especially important. The neglect of children's recreation is frequently cited by authorities in England and on the continent as a cause of delinquency. If we are to avoid repeating the preventable wastage which other countries are now bending every

effort to repair, recreation for children and young people should have special attention during Children's Year.

V. *Children in need of special care.*—Then there are the children with special needs. There are many dependent children who are in no wise different from other children except that unfortunate circumstances have thrown them upon the community for support and nurture. There are, besides, the handicapped children who, by reason of physical or mental defects, can not respond to the training offered in the ordinary school, or whose infirmities require institutional care. The delinquent children are, again, not very different from other children. With proper supervision and guidance they may frequently become good citizens; without wise action by the community they drift into a life of crime.

Children's Year Material.

In each of these five phases of the year's activities, the working program of Children's Year includes, first, definite questions by which the situation in a community may be reviewed, and, second, definite suggestions for work to be done. Copies of the working program and other Children's Year material described below will be supplied, upon application, by the Department of Child Welfare of the Women's Committee of the Counsel of National Defense, 1814 N Street NW., Washington, D. C. The other material includes:

Record cards for the Weighing and Measuring Test. Local chairmen, in asking for record cards, should give an estimate of the number required for reaching all children in their neighborhood. It is especially desirable that in rural communities local chairmen should distribute cards to parents who live too far away to bring their children to a central place for the test.

Leaflets explaining the methods for carrying out the activities suggested. For example, two leaflets on the Weighing and Measuring Test, with suggestions to committees and suggestions to examiners, are ready for distribution, and another leaflet on community work for the protection of mothers and young children is in press.

Press articles for use by local committees. In connection with each of the main topics of the working program, a series of press articles will be prepared for the exclusive use of Children's Year committees.

Copies of the general publications of the Children's Bureau can also be secured through the Department of Child Welfare of the Woman's Committee, 1814 N Street NW., Washington, D. C., or directly from the Children's Bureau, United States Department of Labor, Washington, D. C. The following list indicates the publications of the Bureau which would be of special use in connection with the work of Children's Year.

Children's Year, General:

Child-Welfare Exhibits: Types and Preparation. Bureau publication No. 14.

I. Public protection of mothers, infants, and young children:

- (1) Bulletins addressed to the individual mother and telling her how to care for herself during pregnancy and for her children under 6 years of age.

Prenatal Care, Bureau publication No. 4.

Infant Care, Bureau publication No. 8.

Child Care, Bureau publication No. 30. (In press.)

Milk: The Indispensable Food for Children, Bureau publication No. 35.

- (2) Bulletins concerned with social measures especially affecting infant welfare and the health of children.

Birth Registration: An aid in protecting the lives and rights of children, Bureau publication No. 2.

New Zealand Society for the Health of Women and Children: An example of methods of baby-saving work in small towns and rural districts, Bureau publication No. 6.

Baby Week Campaigns (revised edition), Bureau publication No. 15.

A Tabular Statement of Infant-Welfare Work by Public and Private Agencies in the United States. Bureau publication No. 16.

How to Conduct a Children's Health Conference, Bureau publication No. 23.

Infant Welfare Work in War Time. Reprint from American Journal of Diseases of Children.

- (3) Bulletins discussing causes of mortality and briefly describing social measures to promote the health of mothers and young children.

Infant Mortality: Results of a field study in Johnstown, Pa., based on births in one calendar year, Bureau publication No. 9.

Infant Mortality. Montclair, N. J.: A study of infant mortality in a suburban community, Bureau publication No. 11.

Maternal Mortality from all Conditions Connected with Child-birth in the United States and Certain Other Countries, Bureau publication No. 19.

Infant Mortality: Results of a field study in Manchester, N. H., based on births in one year, Bureau publication No. 20.

Infant Mortality: Results of a field study in Waterbury, Conn., based on births in one year, Bureau publication No. 29. (In press.)

Maternity and Infant Care in a Rural County in Kansas. Bureau publication No. 26.

II. Home care and income:

Care of Dependents of Enlisted Men in Canada. Bureau publication No. 25.

Governmental Provisions in the United States and Foreign Countries for Members of the Military Forces and their Dependents. Bureau publication No. 28.

Juvenile Delinquency in Certain Warring Countries. Bureau publication No. 39. (In press.)

III. Child labor and education:

Child-Labor Legislation in the United States, Bureau publication No.

10. Bureau supply of complete volume is exhausted, but reprints from the above can be obtained as follows:

Child-Labor Legislation in the United States: Separate No. 1, Analytical Tables.

Child-Labor Legislation in the United States: Separates Nos. 2 to 54, Text of laws for each State separately.

Child-Labor Legislation in the United States: Separate No. 55, Text of Federal Child-Labor Law.

Summary of Child-Welfare Laws passed in 1916. Bureau publication No. 21.

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III. *Child labor and education*—Continued.

Administration of Child-Labor Laws:

Part 1. Employment-Certificate System, Connecticut, Bureau publication No. 12.

Part 2. Employment-Certificate System, New York, Bureau publication No. 17.

List of References on Child Labor. Bureau publication No. 18.

IV. *Recreation*:

Facilities for Children's Play in the District of Columbia, Bureau publication No. 22.

Juvenile Delinquency in Certain Warring Countries, Bureau publication No. 39. (In press.)

V. *Children in need of special care*:

A Social Study of Mental Defective in New Castle County, Del., Bureau publication No. 24.

Norwegian Laws Concerning Illegitimate Children, Bureau publication No. 31.

